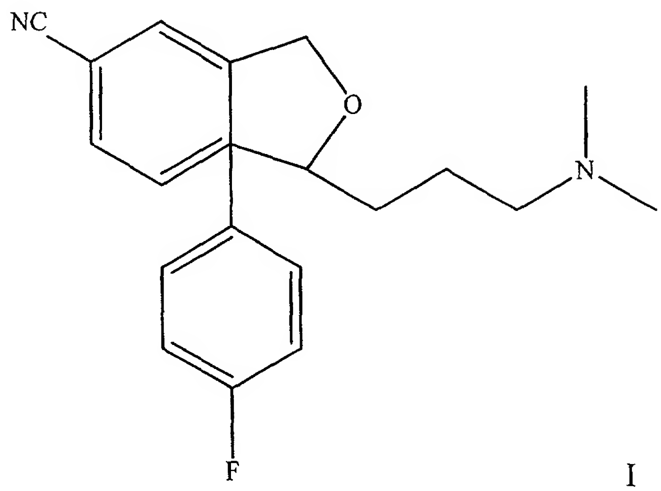
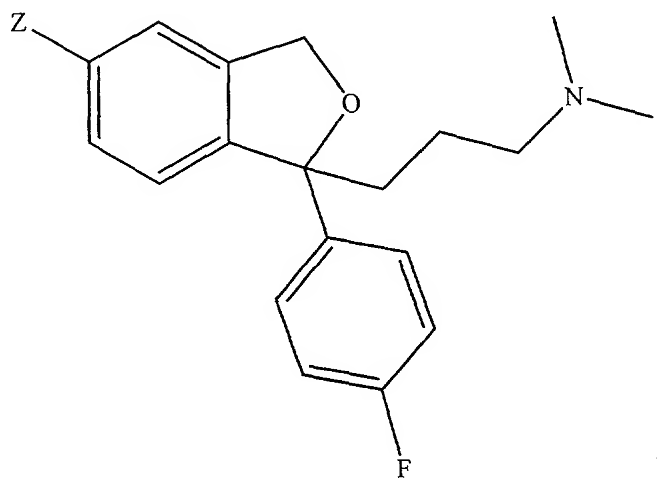
ABSTRACT

A process for the preparation of citalopram of formula (I)



I

in which a compound of formula (II)



II

wherein Z is iodo, bromo, chloro or CF_3-$(CF_2)_n$-SO_2-O- n being 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8, is subjected to a cyanide exchange reaction in which the group Z is exchanged with cyanide by reaction with a cyanide source; the resultant crude citalopram product is optionally subjected to some initial purification and the crude citalopram base is subsequently subjected to a film

distillation process; the resulting citalopram product is then optionally further purified and worked up and isolated as the base or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

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